

A
SERMON
PREACHED
AT THE
ORDINATION
OF AN
Elder and Deacons
IN A
Baptized Congregation
In L O N D O N.

By N. C.

Who is sufficient for these things? 2 Cor. 2. 16.

L O N D O N, Printed for Tho. Fabian, at the Bible in Saint
Paul's Church-Yard, a corner Shop next Cheap-side. 1681.

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What a time for the things of God!

LONDON: Printed for the Author, at the Bible in Smith
Paul's Church-Yard, a corner Shop near (Opposite) 1681

TITUS 1. 5.

For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou
 shouldest set in order the things that are
 wanting, and ordain Elders in every City,
 as I had appointed thee.

THe general Design and Scope of these
 Words, is obvious to the observation of
 every one that reads them; The great
 Apostle of the Gentiles had with good
 success laboured in preaching the Gospel to the
 Creteans; and being himself removed from them,
 after he had as a wise Master-builder laid the
 Foundation of many Churches of Christians in
 Crete, he left Titus among them to build there-
 upon; And while he was resident there, Paul
 sends this Epistle to him, to remind him of that
 Service for Christ in his Churches that he had left
 upon his Islands; whereby he doth not only
 quicken him to his Work, but also furnishes him
 with full and clear Directions for the right ma-
 nagement thereof.

In the Account that our Text gives of the
 Reason for which Paul left Titus in Crete; the
 Service which he was there to be employed in is
 set down

1. In more general and comprehensive terms,
That thou shouldest set in order the things which are wanting.

2. In a more particular Account of one special Charge left upon him, *And ordain Elders in every City, as I had appointed thee.*

That which we have do in the first Place, is briefly to open to you what needs explication in the words.

The Greek word *ἐντάξω*, which is rendred *set in order*, is no where else used in the New Testament, nor in the Version of the Old by the *Septuagint* that I can find: divers learned Interpreters do here render it by *Corrigas*, *that thou shouldest correct*; And *Erasmus* in his Notes, frames a word more expressive of its Emphasis, *super-corrigas*, which imports to correct with accuracy and exactness; as one that goes over a Work again; that he may be sure to leave no blemish upon it, or defect in it. Some understand this part of *Titus* his Charge to respect the correction of the manners of the *Cretians* by reproof and sound Doctrine, and with this sense the *Arabick Version* fully concurs, *Ut res vitiosas corrigas*; *That thou shouldest correct the things that are faulty*; And it is evident in the sequel of the Epistle, That this was one part of his Work: But I conceive this is not so immediately intended by this term, but rather, The settlement and disposing of things relating to the Offices and Government in the House of God, and the Order of their Communion in the Church who were Members of it, in a full and exact agreement with the Rule of Christ's Appointment; which the Apostle had not time to bring

ἐντάξω,
q. d. *Supercor-
rigo*, quod plus
est quam *Cor-
ripi*, & ea quæ
aliqua ex par-
te correctæ
sunt ad limam,
& summam li-
neam perduco.
Meins. in loc.

bring to perfection during his stay with them: And this sense very well agrees with the use of a term of near affinity with this in our Text (*viz.* *διόξταις*) in *Heb. 9. 10.* where the Days of the Gospel are called *the Times of Reformation*; because in them the State of the Church is brought to its utmost perfection here on Earth, and all that was wanting in the Law, is fully supplied in the New Testament.

The Edification and Beauty of the Church is much concerned in her Order, not such an Order as Superstition will dictate, or litigious Nicety contend for, but such as we have already described; which sets her in a conformity with Christ's Will; and particularly the filling up of the Offices which he hath appointed, with Persons duly qualified for the administration of them, and the regular acting both of Officers and Members in their respective places.

The particular Charge given to *Titus* is, To ordain Elders in every City: This is to be explained by conference with *Act. 14. 23.* where the practice of the Apostles themselves is recorded, *And having ordained them Elders in every Church, &c.* *καὶ πόλιν* and *καὶ ἐκκλησίαν* is the same in these Texts: The Converts in every City were not then so numerous but they might conveniently come together in one place for the Worship of God; and so to ordain them Elders in every City, was to do it in every Church. And tho' these first Ordinations were by extraordinary Men, yet the People were not excluded from the just right of choosing their own Ministers; for they were

Χριστοφόρου
Τίτῳ, Et cum
suffragiis cre-
assent. Erasmi.
Vox orta ex
more Græco-
rum qui por-
rectis manibus
suffragia fere-
bant. Beza.

were appointed to their Charge, with the concurrent *Vote and Suffrage of the People*. Howbeit *Tim* was to preside in the management of this Affair for their Guidance and Direction; both with respect to the Office it self, and their choice of Persons duly qualified for it.

In the next place (for the more full opening of the Text) it will be necessary briefly to touch upon the *Quality and Character* of those Persons which we here find concerned in the setting of things in order in the Churches. And,

1. The Person that employed *Tim* in this Service, *viz.* Paul bears the Character, and had the Office and Authority of an *Apostle of Jesus Christ*.

The Apostles had an *immediate and extraordinary Call* to their Office, by God and our Lord Jesus Christ: Hence our Apostle, when he would represent to the *Galatians* the Dignity of his Office, that he might recover them to a stability in that Doctrine which he had preached to them, tells them, *Gal. 1. 1.* that he was an *Apostle, not of Men, neither by Man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father*. Ordinary Ministers, as Pastors or Elders, tho' they were not of Men; that is, receive not their Authority from Men, nor are of *humane right* and appointment, yet are they by Men, so as to be brought to their Office by the Call of the Church; But it was not so with the Apostles of Christ, they were neither of Men nor by Men, but had their Call and Power immediately from Christ, their Ministry being antecedent

cedent to the Church, as that by which it was to be planted.

And as they had an extraordinary Call, so were they also qualified with extraordinary Gifts and Abilities for the Work they were called to, and had the infallible guidance of the Spirit in their Doctrine, which was but necessary, seeing the Churches were to be founded and built thereupon.

Ephes. 2. 20. The Apostles and Prophets of the New Testament are the Foundation, in respect of their Doctrine, the Jesus Christ whom they preached, is the only Foundation of the Church, in respect of Trust and Confidence.

The Power of the Apostles extended to all the Churches, and was equal in them all when they were planted, and therefore Paul saith, *The care*

of all the Churches came upon him daily ; And as a Fruit of this Care in the discharge of his Office, he gives forth this Commission to *Tim* ; and herein we must consider him as acting by virtue of that Authority which himself had received from Christ, who is the first Subject, and Head of all Ecclesiastical Power and Jurisdiction ; There is no such thing as Authority in or over the Church,

but what is derived from Christ, who hath all Power in Heaven and Earth committed to him.

Mat. 28. 19.

2. The Person employed *viz. Tim*, had the Character and Office of an Evangelist. The Evangelists were also extraordinary Ministers, (tho' inferior to the Apostles) and did usually attend the motion and direction of the Apostles, as assistant to them in preaching the Gospel, and setting the Churches in due order when first planted.

2 Cor. 11. 28.

Mat. 28. 19.

2 Cor. 11. 28.

2 Cor. 11. 28.

2 Cor. 11. 28.

2 Cor. 11. 28.

2 Cor. 11. 28.

2 Cor. 11. 28.

2 Tim. 4. 5.

ted. And tho' *Titus* be not expressly called an Evangelist, yet if we consider his Employment, and compare this Epistle to him with those written to *Timothy*, who is particularly charged to *do the Work of an Evangelist*, we shall have no reason to doubt their being both in the same capacity: And they acted not as *Diocesan* Bishops in their particular Charge, but were sometimes employed in one part of the World, and sometimes in another, as the Service of the Gospel required their attendance. And since the ceasing of these extraordinary Officers, and the completing of the Canon of the New Testament, all Church-Offices and Affairs are to be regulated and guided by the ordinary and standing Rule of the Scriptures: And every particular Congregation hath not only *right*, but is in *duty* bound to dispose herself in that Order, and under that Rule and Government, which Christ hath appointed in his Testament.

We shall now proceed to those things which our Text, and the present Occasion calls for some further discourse of;

The first Instance that we have of settling Order in a Christian Church, by the ordaining of ordinary Officers therein, is that of the appointment of *Deacons* in the Church of Jerusalem, *Acts* 6. And this also I take to be included in the general Commission here given to *Titus*; That he should set in order the things that are wanting; for it appears that the Primitive Churches had both Bishops, or Elders, and Deacons, ordained in them, when brought to that Settlement and Order which they were

were to continue in, *Phil. 1. 1.* And the necessity of such an Office, and Officers in the Church, when the number of her Members is increased, will quickly appear, as it did in the Church at Jerusalem; for, *When the number of the Disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians (or Hellenists) against the Hebrews, because their Widows were neglected in the daily Ministration.* *Act. 6 v. 1.*

* The Grecians here mentioned, were not Gentiles, or Greeks by Nation, but such of the scattered Jews, who having their Education among the Greeks, and speaking their Language, were called *Hellenists*, in distinction from those born and bred up in *Judea*, that spake the common Jewish Language, which was then a kind of *Chaldeo-Syriack*, and is called the *Hebrew Tongue*, *Acts 22. 2.* because of its then common use among the Hebrews or Seed of *Abraham* in *Judea*; and with respect to this, *Paul* affirms of himself that he was an *Hebrew of the Hebrews*, *Phil. 3. 5.*

* Judæi sic distinguiebantur; Judæi Palestini, qui hinc Hebræi; *ἡellenισται* Βαβυλωνῶν; & *ἡellenισται* Ἰερουσαλὴμ, qui hinc Hellenistæ, sive Græcenses; qui peculiari utebantur dialecto, quam Hellenisticam vocant: *Drus. vid. etiam Græc. & Lightf. in locum.*

Now upon this murmuring of the Hellenists, for the prevention of all disorder or neglect of this kind for the future; 'The twelve called the multitude of the Disciples unto them, and told them, That it was unreasonable for them to be taken off from the more weighty imploiment of preaching the Gospel to give their attendance upon an Affair of this nature; and therefore that they might be at liberty, to give themselves continually to Prayer, and the Ministry of the Word, and yet the necessities of the poor and orderly dispensing of the Churches Almshouse be provided for also, They commanded them to look out from among themselves seven Men of

V. 2, 3, 4.

B

'honest

P. 5, 6.

Honest Report, full of the Holy Ghost and Wisdom whom they might appoint over this Business; which was accordingly done. This is in short the History of the first Ordination of Deacons; and because in this case what was first in this kind, was to be the Rule and Standard of what should afterwards be done, we shall take a review of some Passages for our present Instruction. And,

First; A Deacon being an ordinary Officer in the Church, appointed to minister therein for the Relief of the Poor; The Election of these Officers of right belongs to that Congregation where they are to serve in this Capacity; And the Holy Apostles, tho' vested with an extraordinary Power, and peculiarly intrusted by Christ with the appointment of such an Office and Officers, after they had informed the Church thereof, and given them a Rule to proceed by, left them to their own voluntary and free choice.

Secondly; The Number here appointed, viz. Seven, was suited to the present Necessity or Convenience of that numerous Congregation in which they were to minister, and is not intended as a Rule, that neither more nor fewer may be appointed in any Congregation after; but that is to be determined by a due comparing of the End of the Office with the Circumstances of each particular Congregation, who are to govern their Choice in point of Number as may best answer the

ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐν
ἀβυσσῶν τοῦ
ἀνθρώπου πλῆθος
τῶν ἐλεησέων
ἐπιβουλεύοντες
&c. Non ipsi
eligunt sed
multitudini
electionem
permittunt;
qui etiam
ecce modum
erant ex illo-
rum curatione
& functione
percepturi;
atque ipsi eligunt & producunt, & manibus imposui. is ordinant, creant atque decla-
rant. Theoph. in locum.

the end, in a sufficient Provision for their present necessity and comfort of their Poor.

Thirdly; The Rule of the Churches proceeding in her Election is laid before her, in an account of those *Qualifications* which are requisite in Persons to be employed in such a Trust; They must be *Men of honest Report*; Men whose Innocent and Holy Life is well attested, Persons of known and approved Integrity, *full of the Holy Ghost, and Wisdom*; And these general Terms are comprehensive of the Particulars mentioned by our Apostle, in that Rule which he hath given about the same Matter, in 1 *Tim.* 3. 8, 9. *Likewise must the Deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much Wine, not greedy of filthy Lucre, holding the Mystery of the Faith in a pure Conscience.* And it is an examination and tryal of the Persons to be chosen by this Rule which the Apostle intends in the next words, *ver.* 10. *And let these also first be proved, then let them use the Office of a Deacon, being found blameless.* And this I the rather mention, that I may rectify a Mistake which I think many have taken up from a misunderstanding of this Text, wherein they suppose that the Apostle requires that a Trial should be made of Elders and Deacons in the discharge of the proper Work of their Office, before they are ordained to that Office; But this way of Trial is as foreign from the Text, as the notion asserted is inconsistent with it self; for observe, He doth not say, Try whether they use the Office of a Deacon well, (which how can they do before they have it?) and then let them be ordained, if for some

magis queros.

time they have acquitted themselves well in it; But the Trial he requires, is antecedent to their using the Office of a Deacon; and is no other than a diligent comparing of the Qualifications of the Persons, with the Characters of one meet for such an Office which he had before set down: This I take to be the plain sence of the words; And if this be not admitted, we must suppose the Rule of one Apostle to contradict the practice of others acting by the same infallible Guidance as he wrote, which is absurd: For it is plain in this of the *Acts*, that they were directed to examine and look into the Qualifications and fitness of the Persons to be chosen for Deacons, before they made choice of them; and that the Apostles did by a solemn Ordination vest them with their Office, before they acted in it, or used the Office of a Deacon.

Fourthly; As to the Work of a Deacon, The Care of the Poor is their special Charge. And in order hereunto, the Contributions and Alms of the Church are to be deposited with them, and intrusted to their distribution, as particular Cases may require.

I shall now draw to a close of this Point, and pass on to what remains, when I have spoken a word or two.

1. To those who are this day ordained and appointed to the Office of Deacons.
2. To the Congregation that hath called them to this Office.

First;

First ; To the Deacons ; There are four things that I shall recommend to you (as necessary in the discharge of that Trust that is committed to you, *viz.* Faithfulness, Compassion, Prudence, and Diligence)

1. Faithfulness ; You have a Trust committed to you, *viz.* the Alms and Contributions of the Church, which are indeed a kind of hallowed or dedicated things, and this is a considerable Trust ; yea the poor Members of Christ, which are dear to him as the Apple of his Eye, are committed to your Care, so far as concerns their Relief and Succour in outward things, and this is a greater Trust ; you are in these things Stewards for the Church, yea Stewards for Christ ; and it is required of a Steward, that he be found faithful ; consider therefore the Duty of your Places, and make Conscience of a faithful discharge thereof, as knowing you must give an account to Christ, who hath appointed you to this Service, and with him there is no respect of Persons.

2. Compassion ; Your Business and Employment is, to relieve the Necessities of the poor Saints ; and this you can never do with a right Spirit, unless you have a fellow-feeling with them in their Necessities, and do by a gracious Sympathy, as it were, put your selves in their stead ; He that gives, must do it with chearfulness, and that he will never do, if Compassion have not first filled his Heart ; Remember that this Office in the Church, is a Fruit of Christ's Pity and Compassion for the Poor ; and it is your Duty to make your distributions in that manner as may best re-

present

present the pity and tenderness of him whom you serve in this Work.

3. Prudence ; Your Pity must be guided by Discretion ; And as it is required that a Deacon should have a plentiful anointing of the good and benign Spirit, that he may be kind and affectionately tender towards his Brethren, so it is no less necessary that he be full of Wisdom also, that he may rightly discern of the Case and Circumstances of those that are to be relieved by him ; And that he may carry an equal ballance in his Ministration, between the encouraging of Idleness on the one hand, and neglect of the real Distresses of any on the other ; both these are extremes to be avoided : And it is certain that there is so great a difference in the temper of Persons, that there will be need of diligent enquiry after the necessities of some, whose modesty would hide them more than is meet, while the unreasonable importunity of others needs a prudent check.

4. Diligence ; It is a Service for Christ that you are employed in, and the Work of the Lord must not be done negligently ; your Heart must be in your Work, and you must not do it *tanquam aliud agens* as by the By, with a slight and indifferent Spirit : But as *Hezekiah* did the Work of God in his place, whose Encomium is, *That in every Work that he began in the Service of the House of God, and in the Law, and Commandments to seek his God, he did it with all his Heart* : And know, that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord, for there is no Service (except that which immediately respects the saving of Mens Souls) more acceptable to Christ than that which you are engaged in.

Secondly ;

2 Chron. 31.
iii.

Secondly; To the Congregation; It is your Duty to give respect to your Deacons, as esteeming their Service in the Church useful and honourable, For he that useth the Office of a Deacon well, 1 Tim 3. 13. purchaseth to himself a good degree, and great boldness in the Faith which is in Christ Jesus; But especially your Duty is to encourage them in their Work by a free and plentiful contribution to the Poor, that out of the abundance of those that enjoy plenty, they may always have a sufficiency to provide for the relief of those that suffer want. Many things might be urged for the opening of your Hearts to so good a Work: But my present time will not admit of enlargement on this Head.

I shall now proceed to the next thing that lies before us, viz. The ordaining of Elders in every City or Church; which was particularly given in Charge unto Titus.

Bishops or Elders are ordinary Officers in the Church, of *Divine Right* and Appointment, and are to be continued therein to the end of the World; Their Office is superior to that of Deacons, as more nearly concerning the Good and Edification of the Church, by so much as the care and conduct of Mens Souls doth transcend the care of the outward Man, and supplies of temporal Life. The care which the Apostles took for this Provision in the Church, we have seen something of in the opening of the words, as also the method they observed in the Calling and Or-

καὶ μεταξὺ ἐπι-
 νομιῶν δὲ δι' ἡ-
 σιῶν, ὅπως ἐὰν
 κοιμῶνται, δι-
 ατίξονται ἑ-
 τεροὶ δεδοκι-
 μασμένοι ἀν-
 δρες τὴν λειτουργίαν αὐ-
 τῶν. Clem. Ep.

Ordaining of Persons to this Work ; it was
 done, as *Clement* saith, οὐνευδουράτος ἐκκλησίας
 πλούς, the whole Church giving their consent and
 approbation : And by their appointment it was,
 that when the Officers ordained by themselves
 were dead, other approved Men should succeed in
 their room, unto whom the Administration of
 Holy Things in the House of God was commit-
 ted, and by whom the Instruction and Govern-
 ment of the Church should be duly provided for.
 We have both the continuance of these Officers,
 and the reason of it asserted, *Ephes.* 4. 11, 12, 13.
And he gave some Apostles ; and some Prophets ;
and some Evangelists ; and some Pastors and Tea-
chers : For the perfecting of the Saints, for the
Work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body
of Christ : Till we all come in the Unity of the
Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God,
unto a perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature
of the fulness of Christ. These last words are ma-
 nifestly extended to the compleating of the intire
 Mystical Body of Christ, and so to the period of
 the dispensation of Grace in this World, till there
 shall no longer be a Church on Earth. And al-
 tho' some of those Offices and Gifts mentioned in
vers. 11. be now ceased, yet it is evident others
 of them must continue to the end, until that
 whereunto a Gospel Ministry is designed, be per-
 fectly accomplished : And it very well agrees with
 the scope of the Apostle's discourse in this place, to
 make a joint mention of extraordinary and ordi-
 nary Ministers, since they are all given by Christ
 for one and the same end, viz. the perfecting of
 his Mystical Body, which affords a good Argu-
 ment

ment for the Union of Christians in their different measures of Attainment, which the Apostle is here pressing them to. The *Apostles, Prophets, and Evangelists*, were of necessity to be employed in the laying of the Foundation of Gospel-Churches, and the continuance of Pastors and Teachers is no less necessary for the continuance and carrying on of the Spiritual Building of the Church to the end of the World. And there is no reason of concluding that all these Officers must always be in the Church, because they are here mentioned together, no more than there is to affirm that the power of working Miracles should never cease, because the promise of such a Power to some Believers, is indefinitely given out with the Promise of Salvation by Faith in Christ, which branch of the Promise is certainly extended to all Believers in all Ages, *Mark* 16. 16, 17, 18.

Now as it is *de facto* evident, that Miracles were for the confirmation of the Gospel, in the first promulgation of it, and are now ceased; so it is as plain, That the Office and Gifts of Apostles, and Prophets, and Evangelists, were for the first planting of the Churches, and no longer to continue, than till their Order was fully settled, and the Revelation of the Mind of God in the New Testament perfected, and then the Wisdom of Christ saw it best to leave the Churches to the Rule of his Written Word, and the guidance of their ordinary Officers according thereto.

Cam to be. The

Adverte eundem Gradum, idemque Officium significari a Paulo, nomine Presbyteri, & nomine Episcopi. — Neutrum siquidem horum est nomen ordinis, sed potius officii. *Cajetan. in locum.*

The Officers which we are now treating of, that are in our Text called *Elders*, *ποιμένες*, are in the very next words stiled *ἐπισκοποι*, *Bishops* or *Overseers*, (the like application of both these terms to the same Persons and Office you may observe in *Act. 20.*) and in the *Ephes.* *Pastors* and *Teachers*. And it is evident the Holy Ghost intends no distinction, or preeminence of Office among those that bear these Characters, by any of these different Terms, but they are all suited to the same Office in its different respects: These Ministers are sometimes called *Elders*, because of their gravity, and precedency in the House of God, perhaps with some respect to the Paternal Authority and Preeminence of the Heads of Families, and Elders of the People amongst the *Israelites* of old; and at other times *Bishops* or *Overseers*, because their Work is to take the oversight of the Flock, and to acquit themselves as faithful *Watchmen*, who watch for the Souls of the People committed to their Trust; that they may give an account of them to the great Shepherd with joy, and not with grief: And because it is incumbent on them to feed the Church with the Words of Eternal Life, and to open the Mind of God to them from the Scriptures, that they may by their Ministry be instructed unto his Kingdom; they are also stiled *Pastors* and *Teachers*.

2 Pet. 5. 2.

Heb. 13. 17.

Act. 20. 18.

Our way being thus far prepared by this general Account of the Office of Eldership, and the necessary continuance of it in the Church, many things do readily offer themselves as proper to be discoursed of under this Head, but (omitting others)

others). I must at present confine my self to a brief enquiry after these two that follow ;

1. The Qualifications requisite in the Person that performs this Office,

2. The Relative Duties of an Elder, and the People that he ministers to.

First ; As to the necessary Qualifications of an Elder or Bishop, they are particularly and fully described to us, in this of *Tit.* 1. 6, 7, 8, 9. compared with *1 Tim.* 3, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, verses. The first thing required in both places is, That he be *blameless*, not absolutely without sin, for there are none such in the World, but free from any notable blemish, or scandalous offence in his Life, a Man whose general carriage and deportment is, to the adorning of that Doctrine which he professeth himself, and must teach to others : And then, *the Husband of one Wife* ; It is not required that he be a married Man, but supposing him to be so, it is necessary that he have been the Husband but of one Wife, *viz.* at one time ; for tho' he had repented of his Polygamy, yet the note of his former incontinency would stick upon him ; for Polygamy had no good hearing even amongst the civilized Heathens ; and it was meet that a Bishop should have a good Report of them that are without, lest he fall into reproach, and the snare of the Devil : And this doth also include such as had put away their Wives and married others, which was a thing that both the Jews and Gentiles used to do, and was utterly forbidden by Christ, except in the case of Fornication. In like manner

his Children (if he have any) and their course of Life under his Family-discipline must be considered; they must be *faithful*, not living still in Idolatry and Gentilism, but of a sober well-governed Life, being in subjection to him with all gravity; for if it do not appear that he rules his own House well, how shall he be esteemed fit to take care of the Church of God? He must also be *vigilant*, careful and diligent in his Work and Duty in the station wherein he hath been, otherwise he will be very unmeet for a Pastoral Charge, which requires perpetual watching; *sober*, and of a temperate Life, adorned with Modesty and Moderation, and of a good behaviour, full of gravity, and humanity in all his Deportments, not *self-willed*, proud and heady, no *striker*, nor soon angry, but a Man that hath good Government of his Passions, and whose meekness disposeth him to instruct and exhort Men with all *Long-suffering* and *Doctrine*: He must not be given to much Wine, but set in himself an Example of Mortification to sensual Delights, and utterly detest all unjust and fordid ways of heaping up, or keeping Riches for himself, as not given to *filthy Lucre*, nor lyable to just suspicion that he undertakes his Charge, from a base covetousness of any outward Emoluments belonging thereto, but of a ready Mind, and sincere Love to Christ, and the Souls of Men; and he must be given to *Hospitality*, that so he may go before others in all Offices of Kindness and Charity towards the Saints; no *bramler*, litigious or contentious Man, but furnished both with Abilities and a ready Mind to teach and instruct others; and there-

2-Tim. 2. 24,
25. & 4. 2.

therefore he must be well furnished with the Knowledge of the Mysteries of God himself, *and one that holdeth fast the faithful Word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound Doctrine both to exhort, and to convince the Gain-sayers.* In a word, He must be a Man Holy and Just himself, and a lover of all that are so ; yea, one whose vertues Time hath proved and made conspicuous, a steady and well-settled Man ; Not a Novice, or new Convert, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the Devil. This is the Rule of Trial that all Churches are bound to have in their Eye, and diligently to attend to, in their Election of Elders ; and when they do so, Christ approves their choice, and *the Holy Ghost* Act. 10. 28: makes their Overseers ; for both the Gifts, Grace, and Authority of a Gospel-Minister are from him ; and no Man or Society of Men under Heaven, can, *de jure*, make him a Minister that Christ hath not qualified for such a Service ; for the validity of all Church Acts depends upon, and is determined by, their conformity to the Rule of Christ's Holy Will and Testament.

And as these Gifts, Graces, and Vertues, ought to be in some good degree visible in him that is ordained to Eldership, before that Charge be committed to him ; so after his Ordination it behoves him perpetually to endeavour the giving of a more abundant proof of them in himself, by a daily increase in their Exercise.

But to proceed ;
Secondly, The Relative Duties of an Elder and the People are to be considered ;

The

and The due handling of this would require a just Treatise, but it cannot be expected that I should enlarge upon Particulars, nor indeed so much as touch upon many things that do properly belong thereto. But all that I can do, is briefly to speak to some things of a general and comprehensive nature, with some enforcement of what may be especially seasonable at this time : And,

First : We shall speak to the Duty of an Elder in his place, which is either more publick, or more private ; for in both these respects, he is under a bond of Duty to Christ, and the Souls of the Members of that Church which he ministers in.

We shall begin with those Duties which are more publickly to be discharged by him : And they are ;

1st. To stand in some respects, and to act in some things, as a *middle Person* betwixt God and the People : Mistake me not, He is not to be a Mediator between God and the Church, or in his own Interest to interpose himself betwixt God and the People, for the procuring of their acceptance with him ; such an Office and Service for the Church on Earth, nor Saint or Angel in Heaven is capable of : The Glory of it is Christ's peculiar : As there is but one God, so in this regard, there is but *one Mediator betwixt God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus*. But in two respects, a Minister stands between God and the People ;

1. As

1. As he is to be the Mouth of the People unto God, and to go before them, in the Exercise of those Gifts and Graces which Christ hath furnished him with, in conceiving, and pouring out the *publick Prayers* of the Church to the most High. And by some this is taken to be the special import of that saying of the Apostle's, in *Act. 6. 4.* *But we will give our selves continually to Prayer, and to the Ministry of the Word;* They seem equally to respect in both (*viz. Prayer, and the Ministry of the Word*) the *publick discharge* of their Office in the Church; and there is no doubt but what is here mentioned, continues to be the Duty of ordinary Ministers in their Station, as much as it was theirs. And the Scripture knows no other Provision for the orderly and profitable performance of this Service in the Church, than what Christ hath made by enduing Persons with those Gifts, and such an anointing of his Holy Spirit, as may enable them to go before their Brethren therein. It would be very sad to have the Souls of Men committed to the care of such as are so unacquainted with, or insensible of, their Spiritual Concerns, as not to be in some good degree prepared for this part of their Work, to be the Mouth of the People, in pouring out their solemn publick Prayers unto God.

*Affidui erimus
tum in præ-
cundo plebi in
precibus ad
Deum, tum in
Plebe institu-
enda. Grot. in
locum.*

2. As he is to be the Mouth of God to the People, to deliver his Message from God, and speak to them in his Name. It is eminently the Work and Business of a Pastor, *To preach the Word, to be instant in season and out of season, to reprove,*

2 Tim. 4. 2.

reprove, reprove, and exhort with all Long-suffering and Doctrine; They are Ministers of the New Testament, and God's Ambassadors unto Men, who are to dispense the Mysteries of God to his Church, and they ought to exercise all diligence herein, Studying to approve themselves Workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth: And woe will be to him that undertakes this Charge, and preacheth not the Gospel; which is the sincere Milk, and Spiritual Food that the Souls of his Flock ought continually to be fed with.

2 Tim. 2. 14, 15

Oportet Episcopum prædicantem mori.

This Duty is so earnestly pressed upon all Occasions where these Things are treated of in the Scriptures, that there is no need of any other Arguments to enforce it, but what are obvious to every one's Eye in the reading of them; And he deserves not the Name of a Minister, Pastor, or Bishop, that labours not herein.

It will not (I suppose) be expected that I should here lay down Rules for Preaching, or enter into a Discourse about the Method of Theological Studies in order thereunto: Only give me leave at present to recommend three things to those that are under so strict and solemn a Charge to preach the Gospel.

1. Let your Care be, to deal with the Souls and Consciences of Men, as knowing that it is the Salvation of Souls which you are to labour after, a Care of Souls that is committed to you, and an account of them that you must make to God: It is not your Business to gratify

tify the itching Ears or wanton Fancies of Men,
 but to speak to their Hearts, and by manifestation
 of the Truth, to recommend your *elder* to every
 Man's Conscience in the sight of God, 2 Cor. 4. 2.
 Lay out your pains in a solid explaining of the
 Principles of Religion, and a judicious accom-
 modation of them to practice; that sincere Pie-
 ty; and the power of Godliness, may be promo-
 ted by your Ministry: Preſs the particular Duties
 of Men in every Relation and Capacity upon
 them, warn them of the heights of Satan, re-
 buke their Errors and Disorders, that go aſtray;
 comfort the Afflicted and Broken in Heart; And
 in theſe things, let no Zeal, Diligence, Boldneſs,
 Industry or Labour be wanting.
 2. That this may be accompliſhed; Be ſure that
 you ſpeak as the *Oracles of God*, and deliver that
 Doctrine to the People which is drawn from the
 pure Fountain of God's Word. It is no leſs
 than the Evidence of Divine Authority, that
 will work upon the Soul, and command the Con-
 ſcience of a Man; whether it be by way of Com-
 fort, Exhortation, or Reproof; it is the ſtamp of
 Heaven upon the Things delivered by you that
 renders them powerful; Let it therefore be your
 principal care in Preaching, clearly to open, and
 pertinently to apply the Scriptures, that your
 Hearers may bear away this Conviction from your
 Sermons, *I ſay you ſhall be the Miniſters of Chriſt*. It is
 not enough that the things you ſpeak be true,
 but you muſt manifeſt them to be ſo by strong
 and convincing Proofs. Make Conſcience of
 giving, what in you lies, the very ſence of the
 ſcripture

Jerome complains of ſome in his Time; That, Id habent curam, non quomodo
Scripturarum medullas ebi-
bant, ſed quomodo aures
Populi, declamatorum ſtoliculis mulce-
ant.

1 Pet. 4. 11.

Holy Ghost in the Scriptures that you speak to ; and weaken not excellent Truths, by wringing them out of such Texts as intend another thing : The word of God is Sacred, and must be handled with all religious respect and reverence. Divine Things will admit of no trifling.

2. Remember that the Duty of your Place is *Not to preach your selves but Christ Jesus the Lord* ; His Glory must be the Mark aimed at by all your Labour, and his Grace the principal Subject of all your Discourses ; It is not a Philosophick Harangue that will save the Souls of Men, but the *preaching of Christ Crucified* ; His Gospel is the *Power of God unto Salvation to them that believe* ; and his Holy Name is the Ointment that perfumes all Religious Exercises ; Therefore I will not only say, Let there be *Aliquid Christi*, something of Christ in every Sermon, but let Christ be the beginning, middle, and end of your Discourses ; for in him are hid *all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge* ; in him is the Fountain and Head-spring of all true Comfort and Holiness. So much for the first Thing.

Colos. 2. 3.

1 Cor. 1. 23.

Rom. 1. 16.

2dly. Unto the publick Work and Charge of a Bishop, or Elder, belongs also the Administration of the Sacraments, or Ordinances of positive Institution in the Church ; as Baptism, and the Lord's Supper ; This appertains to that Dispensation of the Mysteries of God that is committed to him, and to that feeding of the Sheep of Christ which is required of him. And then,

3dly. It

3dly. It is his Duty to take care of the due exercise of *Discipline* in the Church, and the right ordering of all things pertaining to the Government thereof; He is the *Overseer* of God's House, Heb. 13. 17. and is to *rule* therein, not in a despotical or lordly Way, but by the Testament of Christ, as becomes a *Minister*, and as one set over the *Lord's Heritage* who are a voluntary People, and to be governed not with force and rigor, but with their own consent. All the Brethren have an Interest in the management of Church-Affairs, in the admission, and ejection of Members; yet this denies not a peculiar Concernment of the Elder in these things, and a neglect of their due Administration will especially be charged upon him, if guilty thereof. And in these things, great Prudence, Tenderness, Diligence, and Impartiality is required of him. It is a Matter of great importance, that the Gates of the Lord's House, the goings out and comings in thereof be well look'd to. If Members be not received with due caution, our Number may be increased, but not our Joy, and if any be precipitantly, and without just grounds ejected, the scandal and inconvenience will be as great.

And in all these things, an Elder must endeavour so to demean himself, that in the whole course of his Ministry, there may be kept up a very lively representation of the Love, Care, Wisdom, Compassion, Faithfulness, and Patience of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom he serves.

I shall say no more of those Duties that are incumbent on a Pastor in the publick Exercise of his Ministry: But in the next place,

Secondly; There are also Duties of great importance to the Souls of Men, which an Elder is bound diligently to attend the discharge of in a more private and particular way. He is obliged to a constant watchfulness for, and over his People, and ought diligently to enquire and search into the state of his Flock; That those who are in danger to err for want of counsel may be directed; the unruly warned and rebuked; feeble and dejected Souls strengthened, comforted, and encouraged; and those that are beset with Difficulties and Temptations, succoured and relieved. Unto an unwearied diligence in these things, Paul excites the Elders of the Church at Ephesus, by his own Example, *You know (saith he) how I kept back nothing that was profitable for you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from House to House. The like he doth to those of Thessalonica, by Thess. 2. 15, 16, 17. We are weary, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably, we behaved our selves among you that believe: As you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, (as a Father doth his Children) That you would walk worthy of God, &c. And again, Col. 1. 28, 29. Whom (viz. Christ) we preach, warning every Man, and teaching every Man in all wisdom, (i.e. by a suitable applying of Things to them according to their va-*

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Act. 10. 18, &c.

rious Circumstances and Conditions) that we may present every Man perfect in Christ Jesus; Whereunto I also labour, &c. And all this pains must be enlivened by an Holy Example; for if a Minister does not live over the Instructions he gives to others, and appear a burning and shining Light in Life and Conversation, as well as in Doctrine, his ill Manners will do more hurt, than all his Words can ever do good: Examples have the greatest influence upon Men; *Verba docent, Exempla trahunt*. Therefore is that charge so frequently repeated, That they should in all things be *Ensamples* to the Flock.

I will add but a word or two for the encouragement and quickening of a Pastor to his Duty, and then pass on to what remains. What I intend at present, I shall sum up under two Heads: *First*; Consider whom you serve, and by whose Authority you are to act in your place: You are a Minister of Christ, not a Creature of humane appointment; It is by the Holy Ghost that you are made an Overseer, therefore take heed to your self, and to the Flock of God. A like Argument or Morive is included in that of Col. 4. 17. *Says to Archippus; Take heed to the Ministry that thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.* To receive a Ministry in the Lord, is to be employed in a Service for Christ, and by his Order and Authority. Now from hence these things (and others like to them) may be inferred

1. That there is a real dignity and worth in the Office which you are to administer; *He that desires*

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the Office of a Bishop (saith our Apostle) desires a good Work: It is an Office that a Man must labour in, but his Labour is in a *good Work*, viz. that which is honourable as well as useful, as the word καλόν signifies; and you know *Difficilia que pulchra*, honourable Employments are not without their burden. Men may despise this Function, but let not that discourage you; Christ hath honoured you, and let the sense of Duty and Gratitude to him, bear you above all Discouragements to a faithful discharge of your Trust, and that with holy boldness, and fortitude of Mind.

2. If you have received your Office from Christ, you must be responsible to him for the discharge of it; Stewards must one day give an account to their Lord; and thrice happy he, to whom Christ shall say in the day of Account, *Well done thou good and faithful Servant; enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.* There is nothing tends more to engage us to all diligence and faithfulness in our Places, than a deep and fixed thoughtfulness of that *solemn Audit* which we must be brought to, at the Kingdom and Appearing of the great Shepherd.

3. Those that Christ employs in his Work, may expect his gracious presence and assistance in all the difficulties that do attend it; For this we have his word passed; *Lo, I am with you to the end of the World*; tho' you may be persecuted, you shall never be *forsaken* of me; and tho' your Burthen may sometimes press you with a great weight, yet my strength shall be made perfect in your weakness, and my Grace shall always be sufficient for you. It is the Grace and Assistance of Christ that

τὸ καλὸν
καλόν.

Mat. 28 ult.

a Minister must depend upon, and expect the success of his Labours from; and having ground for such an expectation, let him not faint from the apprehension of any hardship or opposition that may lie in his way; for all Power in Heaven and Earth is in his Hand, by whom he is employed.

4. Seeing he is engaged in Christ's Service, the Reward of Faithfulness therein is sure; Christ will not fail to shew himself a bountiful Lord and Master to those that serve him: None ever were, or shall be losers by doing his Work. This is the encouragement that Peter lays before the Elders of the Church, and exhorts them to lift up their Hearts to; *1 Pet. 5. 4. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a Crown of Glory, that fadeth not away:* And this will be a sufficient compensation of all your sorrow and travel here. Look how much your labour hath been more than others, God will cloath you with the brighter Rays of Glory; your Converts shall then be your Crown and your Joy, when *they that have turned many to Righteousness, shall shine as the Stars for ever and ever.*

Secondly; Consider, That it is the Care and Charge of Souls that is committed to you; not the Temporal Concerns of this Life, but the Affairs of Eternal Life are the Business of your Stewardship: Now one Soul is of more worth than all the World, because immortal, and made for an Eternal State: The Influence that the Ministry of the Word hath into the future state of Men, made Paul say, as in an extasie, *Who is sufficient for these Things!* They are the Souls of
Men

Men that God thought it worth the giving of his own Son to redeem; and Christ thought not much to shed his precious Blood for; the Church is a Society of Men which God hath purchased to himself by his own Blood; and now committed to your Care; and appointed you to watch for their Souls; therefore take heed to your selves, and to your Flock; for if any of them perish in an evil way thro' your neglect of Duty towards them, They die in their sins, but God will require their Blood at your Hand.

We come now to the last thing that lies before us, viz. *The Duty of the People towards their Pastors.*

Able and faithful Pastors are a great Blessing; and special Fruit of Christ's Love to his Church; and he as well expects and requires her improvement of so great a Talent; and the cheerful performance of her Duty towards her Ministers, as he doth strictly charge them to acquit themselves with all fidelity and diligence in their places. I am under a necessity of bringing this part of my Discourse into a narrow compass; and therefore shall recommend to you but these four things.

1. You owe to your Pastor great Love, Respect, and Honour; for his Worksake; And God requires that you make a due payment thereof. This our Apostle often presseth with great earnestness; for instance see 1 Thess. 5. 12. 13. *And we beseech you, O Brethren, to know (that is, to acknowledge with due respect) them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and to* manifest

monish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their Work-sake. And again; Let the Elders that Rule well, be counted worthy of double Honour, especially those that labour in the Word and Doctrine, 1 Tim. 5. 17. If you have a true Friend in the World, it is he that watcheth for your Souls, tells you the Truth, and travels night and day to present you perfect unto God: And let not his faithfulness in admonishing you, cause an abatement of your love to him; but if you love your own Salvation, let it rather raise your esteem of him; No wise Man will hate his Physician for giving a bitter Potion when his Life is saved by it, or a Chirurgeon, for performing an Operation painful to him, when the restoring or preserving of a Member of his Body depends thereon. He that brings to you the good Tidings of Salvation, and publisheth Peace, deserves to have his Feet esteemed beautiful, and to be received with the Love and Respect that's due to so good a Message, and the bringer of it: Christ will not bear the contempt of his Messengers, therefore take heed that you provoke him not, by casting a scornful Eye upon them; nor rob your own Souls of the benefit of their Ministry, by entertaining evil Surmises, or undue Prejudices against them.

2dly. You owe Submission and Obedience to them in the discharge of their Office, and in the exercise of that Rule and Oversight which Christ hath committed to them for your Edification; Obey them that have the Rule over you, and submit your selves, Heb. 13. 17. It is not a blind Obedience

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dience that the Apostle requires, nor such as shall suppose a Legislative Power in Church-Officers, but an orderly subjection to them acting in their Office according to the Law and Testament of Jesus Christ; even a ready obedience to the Word of God dispensed by them, and humble submission to their just Reproofs and Ministerial Correction, when rendred necessary by any miscarriage; and this either in the publick or more private discharge of their Trust. God doth not require that Men should pull out their own Eyes, and mancipate themselves to the conduct of Church-Officers, without the exercise of their own Reason and Judgment, as it is in the Papacy, where the blind lead the blind, till both fall into the Ditch. But when the Law of Christ is observed, and a conformity with that urged, by the evidence and demonstration of Truth from the Holy Scriptures, herein the Obedience of the People is justly expected; and he that thinks himself too good, or too wise, to receive Instruction, or submit to Reproof from his Pastor, ill deserves a place in any Christian Congregation. *My Brethren, take heed of a proud factious Spirit; be not many Masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater Condemnation.*

James 3. 1.

And as it is your Duty to receive the Doctrine of Christ dispensed by them with meekness and fear, and with humility to submit to the Discipline which they exercise, according to the Authority they have received from Christ; so also ought you to propose their holy Example for your imitation; Heb. 13. 71 *Remember them which*

which have the Rule over you, who have spoken to you the Word of God whose Faith follows, considering the end of their Conversation. Be followers of them as they are of Christ; for if it be their Duty to be Ensamples to their Brethren, in Word, in Conversation, in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith, in Purity; it must be no less the Duty of their Brethren to write after their Copy, and conform to their Example in all these Things. For if the discharge of this Office be not improved by the Church unto their Edification and real growth in Grace and Holiness, the end of it, as to them, is utterly lost.

1 Tim. 4. 12.

3dly. You are much concerned to continue instant in Prayer to God for them: You know the Apostle Paul often recommends himself to the Prayers of the Church; and if he thought them so necessary for his help, we have much more reason to account them so for ours. The temptations of Ministers are many; they have great Difficulties and Discouragements to conflict with; And their Work is such, as they can never fill up their Places as they ought, but by the special Aid and Assistance of the Holy Ghost; the success of all their Labours depends upon a Divine Blessing, and the presence of God with them; and in these things both the Glory of Christ, and the Comfort and Edification of your own Souls is nearly concerned; which is a sufficient Reason for your making Conscience of this Duty.

Especially,

4thly. You are bound, according to your Ability, to provide a comfortable and honourable Maintenance for them. *Let him that is taught, communicate with him that teacheth* IN ALL GOOD THINGS; *Be not deceived, God is not mocked,* Gal. 6. 6, 7. These words call not only for a Maintenance of Ministers, but for such a plentiful Contribution as may make them partakers with you in all good Things: If God bless the Congregation with a plentiful Portion of this World's Goods, it is their Duty to make their Minister a Party with them in their flourishing Condition; and considering the Place and Employment he is in, and the Service he attends, it would be extremely unworthy to think you have done enough if his pressing Necessities be answered, while you abound in Superfluities. If the Congregation be Poor, their Minister must be content to be poor with them, yea, rejoyce to approve himself a Minister of Christ by hunger and nakedness, if the Providence of God call him thereto: But while it is in the Power of your Hand to provide better for him, God expects it from you; and, *be not deceived, he is not mocked,* neither will he suffer his Commands to be slighted and evaded, without rendering a just rebuke to the Offender; *For whatsoever a Man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

Now that you may the better understand how far you are concerned in this Duty, before I proceed to the farther pressing of it, let me put

put you in remembrance; ^{Coloss. 3. 23}
 1. That a Minister is bound to attend wholly
 and only upon his Calling in the Ministry, and
 not to entangle himself in the Affairs of this life,
 that he may please him by whom he is called to
 this Spiritual Warfare; and nothing but real Ne-
 cessity may dispense with the contrary; his
 whole Time and Strength is little enough to be
 employed in the Work he is called to: he must
 give himself to the Ministry of the Word and
 Prayer, and continue in Reading, Meditati-
 on, &c. as a Man wholly devoted unto Gospel
 Service; and is therefore by his Call to the Mini-
 stry, secluded from those Ways and Means of
 providing for his own Subsistence, as the Trades
 and secular Employments of others furnish them
 with; that his Mind, by the cares of worldly
 Business, may not be diverted from that study of
 God's Word, and Care of Souls, which the duty
 of his Station engageth him to: And if he may
 not expose himself to the careful Thoughts that
 accompany worldly Business, tho' tending to his
 profit: Certainly it is no way meet that he should
 be left to conflict with the thorny Cares of a ne-
 cessitous Condition, while those he ministers to
 have Means to prevent it. ^{2 Cor. 12. 13}

2. It is no less the Duty of a Minister, than of
 other Men, to provide for his Family, and (what
 lies in him) to take care of his Wife and Chil- ^{1 Tim. 5. 8.}
 dren, that they may not be left exposed to a thou-
 sand Miseries and Temptations when he is gone:
 I confess, of all Men in the World, a covetous
 raking Temper worst becomes a Minister; but

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we greatly mistake, if we think he must divest himself of the due Affection of an Husband towards his Wife, or of a Father towards his Children; or that those Fruits thereof, which are justly esteemed commendable in others, should be a fault in him.

3. An Elder or Bishop is under a special Charge to use Hospitality, and to set in himself a pattern of Charity and compassionate Bounty to poor Souls: And if it be his Duty to be hospitable and charitable in an eminent degree, then without Controversy the People are concerned to endeavour that he may be capable of giving proof of this Grace in him, by the exercise of it as there is occasion.

These things being premised, I shall shew you, that you lie under the strongest Obligation imaginable to this Duty.

1. By the Eternal Law of Nature.

2. By the express Command and Appointment of Christ.

3. On the account of the great and manifest Evil and Inconvenience that follows the neglect thereof.

First: The Law and Light of Nature obligeth you to it, as to the matter of Equity and Justice. And from hence our Apostle takes his first Plea, in 1 Cor. 9. 7, &c. *Who goeth a Warfare any time at his own Charge? Who planteth a Vineyard, and carets not of the Fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a Flock,*

Flock, and eateth not of the Milk of the Flock?

The Ministry is a Warfare, undertaken at the Command of Christ, for the Service of your Souls; and it is as reasonable that the Minister should receive a supply of outward things from you, as it is that a faithful Souldier should receive his Pay from his Captain at the charge of the Common-wealth, for whose good he militates. Shall a Man feed a Flock (as a Pastor does) and be denied to eat of the Milk of that Flock; which it is his work to keep and feed? Or is it consistent with common Justice, to deprive a Man of the Fruit of that Vineyard which is planted and manured by his own Labour? Such is the case in respect of Maintenance between a Minister and the People; It is not your Charity that I ask for him, but *Justice and Debt* that I plead for; He is employed in your Service, and of right should live upon your Charge. Nay, you have called him off from other Business, and therefore his Maintenance is as due from you as is the Wages of your Servant; tho' I fear some give more to the meanest Servant in their House, than they are willing to do to their Minister. Certainly, if you chuse as you ought, your Ministers are not of the *lowest of the People*; but may be allowed to have a share of Parts, common Prudence, and Ability for Business, with other Men; and could manage Trades, or fall into other Employments, and get Estates as well as you, if they were not devoted to a better Service; and must they needs be devoted to Necessities and Misery in the same hour that they enter upon the Ministry? My Brethren, this

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1 Cor. 9. 8, 9,
10, 11.

ought not to be. Let your Ministers have as good treatment at least as the Law provided for the Ox that trode out the Corn, who might not be muzzled: Neither was this written for the sake of Oxen; for, *Doth God take care of Oxen?* Or was there no higher end of this Law, than that the Bruit Creature should not be abused? Certainly there was; and for our sakes, no doubt, was this written, *That he that ploweth should plow in hope, and that he that thresheth in hope, should be partaker of his hope.* For, *If we have sown unto you Spiritual Things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your Carnal Things?*

Secondly; The Lord hath not left us to argue this only from general Principles of Reason and common Equity, but, to put the Matter beyond dispute, hath superadded his express Command: Thus he provided for his Ministers in the Time of the Law, which the Apostle urgeth in the next place, 1 Cor. 9. 13. *Do ye not know that they which minister about Holy Things, live of the Things of the Temple? And they which wait at the Altar, are partakers with the Altar?* God did no sooner separate the Levites to the Service of his Sanctuary, but he by Law provided for their Subsistence: And tho' they were but one Tribe in twelve, yet the Tenth of the Increase of the whole Land was given to them, besides the First-Fruits and Offerings, and divers other Advantages; so that their Lot might equal, yea, exceed that of their Brethren. This Law indeed is now abrogated, and we pretend to no right of Tything your Estates;

Estates; but the moral Equity of it can never cease, neither hath Christ left Gospel-Ministers to the wide World, but hath made provision for them also, so far as the interest of his Command will go with them that profess his Name; for so it follows, *Vers. 14. Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they that preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel.* The Labourer is still worthy of his Hire, and not the less worthy because he labours in the Gospel; Tho' indeed (if Men did fully come up to their Duty, yet still) the Charge of Gospel-Worship will appear very inconsiderable when compared with that of the Law; for, were that my Business, I think I could demonstrate that the fifth part of their Estates was yearly to be spent in things relating to the Temple-Service. And if we are sensible of the great Priviledg and Blessing of the Gospel, on higher accounts than merely the ease of those Burthens, we shall never think much to defray the moderate Charge of a Gospel-Ministry, in such a manner as may give a Reputation to our Profession.

Thirdly; That you may prevent the evil and inconvenience that follows the neglect of this Duty, it concerns you chearfully to practise it; I might have said *Evils and Inconveniences* as of many; for many there are, and those of easy observation to an unprejudiced Eye; but it is the discouragement of Study which at present I chiefly aim at; That Study must needs be discouraged (I intend the study of Theology) by the Peoples neglect to make a comfortable Provision for

their Ministers, is too evident to require a Proof; who will apply himself to gather and lay up those Stores of solid Learning which are needful to a Minister, when he can expect to purchase nothing to himself but Poverty and Distress thereby? Or how shall a Minister be capable to furnish himself with the *universal knowledge* of Things relating to his Work, that hath no Means of providing for his own Information, or no Time free from Cares and worldly Business? And the disadvantage of this will at last fall to the share of the People that he ministers to. He that considers that the Holy Scriptures are originally written in *Hebrew* and *Greek*, must have a hard Forehead if he deny the usefulness of Learning to a Minister; besides many other things there are that call for it, in reference to the opening of the Scriptures, which I cannot now insist upon. And it is not without diligent and continual study, that the deep Things of God can be searched out, and so proposed to you, as to enrich your Minds with the clear and solid knowledge of them. I confess, a little Learning, and less Study, may furnish a Man with such a Discourse as may please some weak Persons, that judg of a Sermon by the loudness of the Voice, and affectionate Sentences; or that can fancy themselves to be fed with the Ashes of jingling Words, and Cadency of terms in a Discourse: But alas! the seeming warmth of Affection that is stirred by such means, is as short-liv'd as a Land-Flood that has no Spring to feed it. He that will do the Souls of his People good, and approve himself a *Pastor after God's*

God's Heart, must feed them with Knowledge and Understanding; and endeavour to maintain a constant Zeal and Affection in them, by well-informing their Judgments, and such an opening of the Mind of God from the Scriptures, as may command their Consciences: And this is not to be expected, but from him that labours in his Study as well as in his Pulpit. Mistake me not! I know the success, and Fruit of all the studies and labours of him that preacheth the Gospel, is from the Grace and Power of the Holy Ghost; but *the assistance of the Spirit* is to be expected by us *in the way of our Duty.* These things might be yet applied more home to my present purpose; but perhaps some will think there is too much said already (tho' I heartily wish more were not needful) and my Time calls me to put a period to this Exercise. And therefore I will only add a word for the enforcement of this and the other Duties which I have laid before you; by accommodating the same things to you, that were before touched, for the encouragement and quickning of your Pastor in his Duty.

First; Remember that your Pastor is *the Minister of Christ*, one that dispenseth the Mysteries of God to you in his Name; and therefore (he acting in his Place, according to his Duty) the Lord Jesus will account that done to himself; that is done to his Minister; *He that receiveth you* (saith he) *receiveth me;* and *he that despiseth you, despiseth me,* &c. If the Name and Authority of Christ will beget an awe in you, or his matchless

Mat. 10. 40.

with

Luk. 10. 16.

and unspeakable Love influence you, there is no want of *Motives* to those Duties that have been prest upon you : If you acknowledg a religious Respect and Reverence due to the Son of God, exercise it in humble obedience to his Word : And if you love him, and value his Gospel, treat not his Ministers in an unworthy manner ; and forget not, That he who gave his Life a Ransom for you, well deserves a return of the greatest love from you, and to be *honoured* by you, not only with good words, but with your *Substance, and the first Fruits of all your Increase.*

PROV. 3. 9.

Secondly ; Tis the Business of your *Salvation*, and the Concern of your *precious and immortal Souls* that a Minister is imployed in ; and therefore it is much more your own Interest than his, that you should make Conscience of your Duty ; with this Argument the Apostle enforces his exhortation, *Heb. 13. 17. For they watch for your Souls, as they that must give an account, that they may do it with Joy, and not with Grief ; for that is unprofitable for you.* The Ministry can never be effectual to the saving of your Souls, if you be not sincere in Obedience under it, And will you be less careful for your Souls, and their eternal Welfare, than you are for your Bodies, and the Comforts of a Temporal Life ? Can you be content to lay out your Strength and Substance to provide for these, and neglect the other ? It is sad to consider how many there are among Professors that live in *this World*, as if there were no truth in the Report of *that which is to come* ; and have

have the meanest esteem of the most necessary means of Salvation, viz. the Word, and Ordinances of Christ, and a Gospel Ministry: Many there are, that besides a Provision of Necessaries, can expend perhaps an hundred pounds *per annum*, more or less, for the Convenience, Ornament, or Delight of a frail Carcase, that will grudge half so much for the Poor, or the support of Gospel-Worship: If their Bodies be afflicted, it is not five, ten, or twenty pounds that they think too much for a Physician, in recompence of his skill and care about them; when it may be they can scarce afford half so much to him that continually studies and travels to promote the Cure and Salvation of their sick Souls: But when Men come to be thro'ly posselt, That Eternity is no Fiction, and the Gospel is the only means of escaping the Wrath to come, and inheriting Eternal Glory, they will take other measures about these things.

To conclude: We have seen something of those gracious Provisions that Christ in his Wisdom and Faithfulness hath made for his Church, in the appointment of Deacons for the refreshing of the Bowels of the Poor, and Pastors for the guidance and nourishment of your Souls unto Eternal Life: We have heard something also of the Duty he expects both from the Officers and Members in his Church to the end of the World: What now remains, But that we all in our places make Conscience of living over his Commands, (for if we know these things, happy are we if we do them) and practically acknowledg his
Love

Heb. 13. 10, 11.

Love and Faithfulness with constant admiration of his Grace, and the return of hearty Prayers to him for all these Fruits of it: Which that you may do, *The God of Peace that brought again from the Dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, thro' the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant, Make you perfect in every good Work, to do his Will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, thro' Jesus Christ, to whom be Glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

five, ten, or twenty, or thirty, or forty, or fifty, or sixty, or seventy, or eighty, or ninety, or one hundred, or more, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the author of life, and the giver of life, and the Lord of life, and the Lord of glory, and the Lord of honour, and the Lord of power, and the Lord of majesty, and the Lord of dominion, and the Lord of all things, Amen.

To conclude: We have seen something of those gracious Provisions that Christ in his Will, Love and Faithfulness hath made for the Church, in the appointment of Officers for the refreshing of the Bowels of the Poor, and Pastors for the guidance and nourishment of your souls into Eternal life: We have heard something also of the Duty he expects both from the Officers and Members in his Church to the end of the World: What now remains? But that we all in our place make Conscience of living over his Commandments (for if we know these things happy are we if we do them) and practically acknowledging his Love.



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